

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: B. Rhodes

Seconded by: B. Stone

WHEREAS Muskoka District Council, through Resolution 38/2026, which passed unanimously, requested that The District Municipality of Muskoka be exempt from the appointment of Regional Chair provisions included in Bill 100 (Better Regional Governance Act);

AND WHEREAS Minister Flack's response in correspondence dated May 6, 2026, confirmed that he intends to utilize the authority granted to him with respect to the appointment of all eight heads of council for the upper-tier municipalities outlined within the legislation;

AND WHEREAS Muskoka District Council, at its meeting held on May 19, 2026, expressed their formal opposition to this response; and a strong desire to provide selection criteria to be contemplated by the Minister in advance of any appointment being made, should this occur;

AND WHEREAS a survey of Muskoka District Council demonstrates strong support for a District Chair who has prior elected municipal experience, a strong and ongoing connection to Muskoka, the ability to build consensus, understand Muskoka's rural and northern realities, and provide strong leadership;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT a letter be written to Premier Ford, Minister Flack, Associate Minister Smith, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and impacted municipal regions respectfully requesting that the criteria above be taken into consideration when contemplating the appointment of the Muskoka District Chair for the 2026 to 2030 term.

*amended by Resolution
67/2026.*

Carried

Defeated

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: D. Smith

Seconded by: B. Rhodes

THAT Motion /2026 be amended to:

1. replace paragraphs 3 and 4 with the following:

“AND WHEREAS Muskoka District Councillors, at their meeting held on May 19, 2026, expressed extreme disappointment to this response; and a strong desire to provide selection criteria to be contemplated by the Minister in advance of any appointment being made, should this occur;

AND WHEREAS Muskoka District Council met today, June 3, 2026 to establish a suggested selection criteria;

AND WHEREAS a survey of Muskoka District Council demonstrates strong support for a District Chair who:

- has prior elected municipal experience;
- has a strong and ongoing connection to Muskoka;
- has the ability to build consensus;
- Understands Muskoka’s rural and northern realities; and
- provides strong leadership”

2. adds the following paragraph to the end of the motion:

“AND THAT once the application period for the position of the District of Muskoka Chair closes, the province shares the list and resumes of candidates with District Council so that said Council can make recommendations of the desired candidate to the Minister ahead of the formal appointment process.”

Carried  _____

Defeated _____

68/2026

Muskoka District Council
June 3, 2026

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: R. Lacroix

Seconded by: P. Koetsier

WHEREAS The District Municipality of Muskoka formally requested that the Province respect local democratic governance by allowing Muskoka District Council (Council) to continue appointing its own Chair;

AND WHEREAS the District of Muskoka is a unique northern and rural municipality, spanning thousands of square kilometres of lakes, forests, and small communities, requiring a governance model grounded in local accountability, collaboration, and local trust;

AND WHEREAS Minister Flack has confirmed the Province's intention to appoint the District Chair, contrary to the expressed will of Council;

AND WHEREAS the experience of the Region of Niagara demonstrated the governance risks associated with provincially appointed regional chairs, including instances where the appointed Chair undertook activities contrary to the expressed will of Council, including independent outreach and engagement with lower-tier municipalities;

AND WHEREAS the District Chair currently plays a role in recommending appointments to external bodies and District committees, and the appointment of the Chair by the Province raises legitimate concerns regarding impartiality, local accountability, and the potential for political interference in governance appointments;

AND WHEREAS the Province's decision removes the Chair from direct accountability to the elected members of Council and, by extension, the residents they represent;

AND WHEREAS Council retains authority over its internal governance, procedures, committee structures, and appointment processes under the *Municipal Act, 2001*;

motion deferred to
staff 69/2026.
XIB

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT should the Province proceed with appointing the District Chair:

1. Remuneration

The District of Muskoka shall not fund, subsidize, or otherwise assume responsibility for the remuneration, benefits, or discretionary expenses of the appointed Chair, and that this position be formally communicated to the Province.

2. Committee and Board Appointments

All appointments to District committees, boards, and external agencies be made exclusively by Council resolution, and that the Clerk and Chief Administrative Officer be directed to bring forward an appointment process that does not include the participation of the District Chair.

3. Committee Leadership and Governance Structure

The composition, mandates, and leadership appointments of all District committees be determined exclusively by Council resolution, ensuring governance authority remains with elected representatives.

4. Direction to Staff

Council affirms that strategic direction to the Chief Administrative Officer and senior staff must remain grounded in the will of Council as expressed through duly adopted resolutions, and directs staff to report back on any governance implications arising from provincially appointed chair authorities.

5. External Government Relations and Advocacy

Any meetings initiated by the District Chair with elected officials, ministries, or staff from other levels of government, where District business, advocacy, or policy positions may be discussed, shall require prior notice to Council, attendance by at least one additional member of Council and one member of the District Strategic Leadership Team, and that such meetings be documented and publicly reported.

6. By-law Amendments

Staff be directed to review the affected District by-law(s) and report back on any impacts or unforeseen concerns arising from the proposed changes to District governance, and, where applicable, bring forward notice of amendment to the District's Procedure By-law and the amending by-laws to give effect to this resolution for Council's consideration.

AND THAT This resolution be circulated to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, local MPPs, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, all Regional governments, and made publicly available in order to clearly communicate Council's position to Muskoka residents.

AND THAT Council affirms that authority within Muskoka's government must remain grounded in those elected by its residents and will take all available steps within its lawful jurisdiction to uphold that principle.

** Referred to staff
(June 15 Council meeting)*

Carried _____

Defeated _____

69/2026

Muskoka District Council
June 3, 2026

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: R. Maloney

Seconded by: B. Rhodes

THAT motion 68/2026 **be referred to staff** to provide additional input as it relates to implications related to clauses 1 through 6 and report back to Council at its June 15 meeting.

Carried



Defeated

P70/2026.

Muskoka District Council
June 3, 2026

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: A. Edwards

Seconded by: E. Strength

THAT By-law 2026-20 being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of The District Municipality of Muskoka at this meeting held on the 3rd day of June 2026 be amended by the addition of resolutions 66/2026, 67/2026,

AND THAT the by-law, as amended, be read and passed.

and 69/2026

Carried



Defeated

P71/2026.

Muskoka District Council
June 3, 2026

The District Municipality of Muskoka

Moved by: D. Smith

Seconded by: P. Kelley

THAT we do now adjourn to meet again on Monday, June 15, 2026, or at the call of the Chair.

Carried _____

Defeated _____